

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 002555

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [GZ](#) [FR](#) [WB](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH AGREE ON NEED TO SUPPORT GAZA

DISENGAGEMENT, BUT WANT TO MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT HAPPENS AFTER

REF: STATE 68083

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) We discussed reftel talking points on President Bush's April 11 meeting with Israeli PM Sharon and the need for the U.S. and EU to send similar messages supporting Gaza disengagement with FM Barnier's Middle East Advisor Christophe Guilhou and MFA DAS-equivalent for the Levant Christian Jouret April 14. Guilhou listened carefully to reftel points and said that FM Barnier had understood the same message on the need to focus on Gaza withdrawal and not jump ahead to final status issues from Secretary Rice, during their April 13 telcon. Guilhou assured us that the GoF agreed on the importance of Gaza disengagement and the need to support it and encourage the Palestinians to take up the Israeli offer on coordinating implementation. The GoF also supported the U.S. proposal to appoint former World Bank President Wolfensohn as Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. While the GoF agreed with us on the importance of Gaza withdrawal, Guilhou affirmed that France would continue to "maintain a perspective" on what happens after Gaza withdrawal, particularly in the West Bank. He repeated familiar French points on the fragility of President Abbas, whom he said needed to be seen obtaining benefits from dialogue with Israel, which so far had not been forthcoming. On the April 15 discussion between EU FM's, Guilhou said the subject of Gaza withdrawal was likely to come up among other topics, though no declaration would be issued given the informal nature of the meeting. Guilhou reaffirmed that the GoF would continue to put forth positive statements on the courageous nature of the Gaza withdrawal and the opportunity it represents. (Note: President Chirac, in an April 13 speech at a dinner in honor of visiting Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, described Gaza withdrawal as "the occasion for a relaunch of the roadmap to arrive at a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security." End note.)

2. (C) MFA DAS-equivalent Jouret, in a separate discussion with poloff, said FM Barnier appreciated the Secretary's April 13 briefing on the President's meeting with PM Sharon and understood the U.S. message on the need to focus on Gaza disengagement. He reaffirmed that the GoF agreed on the need to help PM Sharon on Gaza disengagement, which France had lauded publicly as "courageous." Jouret added, however, that we needed to help President Abbas as well, not just by throwing more money at the Palestinians, but by offering political support. The GoF shared the view that the Palestinians needed to engage more on Gaza withdrawal and that there had been a lack of Palestinian energy on the issue until now. In Jouret's view, the Palestinian lack of action could also be explained by a lack of coordination so far on the Israeli part and the dwindling confidence among the Palestinians that an independent state was possible. When reminded by poloff that the Israelis had offered to coordinate on implementation, Jouret agreed that the Palestinians should seize the opportunity to do so. He expressed regret, nonetheless, that we can't give the Palestinians more in terms of reassuring them that a political horizon exists beyond Gaza. He summed up that the GoF agreed on the need to support Gaza withdrawal and the first step it represented, but the GoF nonetheless remained worried about President Abbas' declining popular support and that PM Sharon had not done enough to help him. Jouret described Israeli gestures on prisoner releases as insufficient and the Israeli pull-out from Jericho as a "joke," noting that French diplomats on the ground had verified that Israeli checkpoints were still there with Israeli army units just a short distance away.

LEACH